

Memorial Resolution on the Death of  
Former President of Our Bar, Francis B. Haas, Jr.

Today we mark the life and we mourn the death of our friend and esteemed colleague, Francis B. Haas, who died on April 18<sup>th</sup> of this year. Frank was a man for all seasons and every season. He was a fine lawyer, a valued counselor, a friend to almost everyone he ever met more than once, a generous supporter of those who needed his help, a man who never missed a chance to attend or give a party; a man who gave of himself to advance the welfare of his profession, his community, his neighborhood, his firm, his church, and our Association.

Frank was born on June 1, 1926, and spent the first 12 years of life in Bloomsburg, where his father served as President of what is now Bloomsburg University. When his father was called to serve in the Pennsylvania Department of Education - ultimately as its Secretary - the Haas family moved to Harrisburg. He attended the Harrisburg public schools, graduating from William Penn High School in 1943. He immediately entered Bucknell University, but upon turning age 18, enlisted in the Army Air Corps, and served to the end of the war. He returned to Bucknell, receiving his B.A. in 1947. After a year off for illness, Frank entered Penn Law School, and graduated with an L.L.B. degree in 1951.

Frank spent his entire professional career at the firm of McNees Wallace & Nurick. He modeled the best qualities of the firm founders – Sterling McNees and Gilbert Nurick – values of character and integrity, and of community service through the work of an honorable profession. He started with the firm in 1951, and was an active lawyer there until his formal retirement in 1995. But after that formality, he retained an office at the firm and was an almost daily presence there until, in 2013, declining health made that impossible.

Frank's professional work could best be described as a "generalist." He practiced, at least for a time, in the era when good lawyers could take on work in a wide array of substantive legal areas and could very capably

represent and advise clients in the full range of their personal and business matters. And Frank flourished as a generalist, because he had a keen mind, but also because he knew how to attract and inspire other lawyers to do good work. He was a consummate team builder and team player. He was generous in delegating work throughout the firm, without claiming the starring role in handling of successful projects, and in recognizing and building up the careers of capable young lawyers who were coming on the scene at the firm. Frank was not the sole author of the firm's success, but he played a critical role in its ability to transition from the leadership of its founders, through successive generations of leadership. Frank was a key element in keeping the firm glued together.

One example: Frank was elected Managing Partner of the firm in 1976, immediately after Sam Schreckengaust, and Frank was succeeded in that office in 1984 by Rod Pera. Sam and Rod each left the firm after their time as the firm leader – Sam to become the first General Counsel of The Hershey Company, and Rod to become President of the Milton Hershey School. Frank stayed at the firm – because it was the place he wanted to be. He continued for another decade of productive legal service, and at the same time, he loyally supported the work of successive firm leaders as they navigated the challenges of growth in a wildly changing legal marketplace.

The highlights of Frank's legal career are remarkable because they demonstrate Frank's strengths as a lawyer. Those strengths were fully aligned with his devotion to public service. He was City Solicitor to Mayor Harold Swenson, and helped to lay the groundwork for the Harristown Development renewal project. He was General Counsel for Harristown Development Corporation, and played a central role in two dynamic decades of building the core elements in the infrastructure of downtown improvements – the building of a new city hall, the creation of four parking garages and an integrated city parking system; the financing and construction of the Strawberry Square Key bloc; building the tower at 333 Market Street, the realignment of Market Square and Second Street; the creation of the Hilton Hotel and Towers.

Frank was a central and constant figure in the Harristown story. He enjoyed the support and respect of a strong board of directors at HDC and dynamic staff leadership. As with any visionary project, there were significant obstacles; lots of opposition to varying aspects of the plan; many

chances to founder on seemingly intractable problems. But it didn't. Frank Haas, as General Counsel to HDC saw the enterprise through multiple serious, complicated, and some potentially disastrous crises. Always with an eye toward the important goals of the effort, he helped to develop the path forward toward a productive outcome. He could reach agreements with difficult adversaries – using whatever combination of legal, factual, and practical advocacy would help carry the day. When compromise was necessary, he could, although he was a principled man who fully recognized the price that was being paid to reach any compromise.

The HDC work would be sufficient for any man's career, but Frank's included other contributions to the welfare of his city and the region. His engagement in the establishment of Harrisburg Area Community College, its development on city land at the north end of town, and its progression into a regional powerhouse of educational opportunity is well known. As in his most notable successes, Frank worked with a key group of civic leaders in the effort. In addition to Frank Haas, the pantheon of HACC founders includes our former members Bruce Cooper and Jim Evans, with whom Frank enjoyed splendid cooperative relationships and great mutual respect. Frank served as HACC's solicitor and provided his counsel for its first 31 years.

Frank liked people; he had an affability, and an immediate ease with people that was engaging and genuine. He was direct, free of pretension, and generous in spirit. Frank was a gifted athlete; he played collegiate basketball and tennis at Bucknell, and stayed engaged with both those sports through his adult life. Some here will remember noontime basketball games at the YMCA where he was a competitive force for many years.

Frank liked the company of lawyers; he was a key figure in bar association activities for over half a century. He served as Bar President in the year 1970, and continued to play an important role in the Bar's forward progress. He led the effort to buy a headquarters building for the Bar Association - that culminated in the purchase of 213 North Front Street in 1974. He then led in the watershed decisions to professionalize the Bar staff and hire our first full time Executive Director, Al Levinthal, and to bring the publication of the Dauphin County Reporter "in-house." In due course, the Association renovated the building, purchased a liquor license and opened a private dining facility.

Frank headed the Bar Foundation for many years, and saw to the productive use of its resources for projects that ranged from funding for Legal Services to sponsoring and then underwriting the Association's "History of Law and Lawyers in Dauphin County." The Bar's history exists today because Frank Haas willed it into being.

Frank cared about the Bar's history, and undertook various projects and researches that interested him. For example, he single-handedly investigated the history of a distinguished African-American lawyer, Justin Carter, who had been blackballed from membership in the DCBA in 1904. Mr. Carter died in 1947, after a remarkable legal career, without ever having again sought membership. Frank gathered a committee, wrote a detailed report and at the annual meeting in 2002, the DCBA resolved to correct its century old error, and admitted Mr. Carter to membership. Frank cared about historic injustices, and wanted to make a point that was symbolic but important.

Frank cared about and worked on important civic and professional issues. He didn't pick light or trivial ones – he chose issues that really mattered to the welfare of our profession and our society at large, and Frank tried to change the status quo. Three deserve brief mention:

- 1) Frank cared deeply about the integrity, independence, and competence of our judges. He worked hard on the PBA project to pass merit selection. It actually got on the ballot in 1970, and was only narrowly defeated then. One of Frank's abiding disappointments was that merit selection of judges (at least at the appellate court level) was not adopted during his lifetime.
- 2) Frank understood firsthand the problems of fragmented local governments, and he undertook early in his "retirement years" to preach the gospel of regional government. He did his research, developed his arguments and position papers, and then he gave dozens of speeches - to any community, civic, or church group that would hear him speak. It was a compelling message, supported by data and logic. Regional government remains a critical issue in Pennsylvania today, and if it ever comes, Frank will have to be credited as one of its visionary forbears.

- 3) Frank attended Harrisburg's city schools; as did his sons Steve and David. Frank cared deeply about the desperate condition of the city school system – prior to Mayoral takeover of the schools – and Frank believed that he could be a force for change if he were in a position of authority on the School Board. He recruited four other persons to run with him, as a team, and all but one of them were elected to serve a term of four years. The work they did during that time had a very constructive impact on the district and its students.

In each of these endeavors, Frank embodied the core belief that lawyers are called upon to serve a broader vision of public interest, in part as a matter of professional obligation, but, importantly, because lawyers are uniquely suited to serve as civic leaders. A few lines from his 1970 presidential address to the Bar Association say it well. He called upon his fellow lawyers to become engaged. He urged all lawyers to...

*take their special talents, born of legal training and nurtured in the day to day life of active practice, into all areas of public life. ... As a group, only lawyers qualify as the generalists of our generation, the group which can best comprehend the divergent forces and points of view rampant in our land, the conflicting demands for freedom and order, place them in proper perspective, and promote the true and lasting currents among them....enlightened policy without polemics, if you wish.*

And then, he gave this challenge:

*If you think someone else can do the job better, you're mistaken! If you think you can afford not to participate or involve yourself, you're wrong again.*

We miss Frank's effortless enjoyment and embrace of the good things in life, his friendship, his support and counsel.

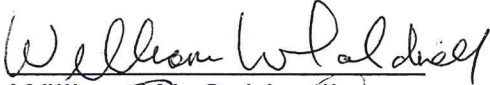
We honor his memory by following his exhortation and his example.

WHEREFORE, be it resolved that the Bar Association mourns the death of Francis B. Haas, Jr., and extends to his sons, Steven Haas and David Haas our deepest sympathy. AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial resolution be place on the record of this Court and in the records of the Association that Frank Hass valued so deeply.

Respectfully submitted,

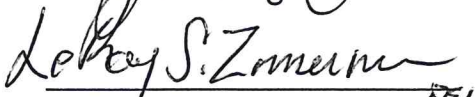
The Francis B. Haas, Jr. Memorial Resolution Committee

  
David M. Kleppinger, Chairman

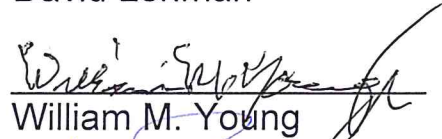
  
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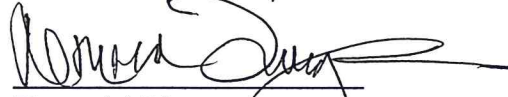
  
LeRoy S. Zimmerman


  
David Lehman

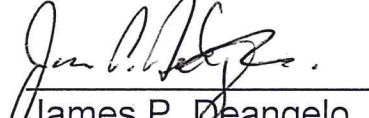
  
William M. Young

  
Harvey Freedenberg

  
John C. Howett, Jr.

  
Donald Morgan

  
Steven K. Haas

  
James P. Deangelo